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SUBJECT: UNAMID: PRESSURE BUILDING AT UN FOR KARAKE DECISION

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff for Reasons 1.4 B/D.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. United Nations senior leadership reportedly believes they must decide soon whether to remove Rwandan General Karake as UNAMID deputy force commander in the aftermath of his indictment by a Spanish court and the issuance of a related Interpol notice. Our contacts with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the UN Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), and the Secretary General's office make clear that the UN understands the potential risks to Rwanda's presence in UNAMID and the need to deal with Rwanda cautiously before making any decisions. USUN has informed UN contacts that Ban should not presume USG willingness to carry difficult UN messages to Kigali but should allow Kigali to save face in the event Ban decides to dismiss Karake. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) In several conversations with the office of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, DPKO, and OLA over the past

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three days, USUN has learned that Ban had sent back to DPKO and OLA the question of whether to retain General Karenzi Karake as UNAMID deputy force commander. DPKO's Michael Gaouette (integrated team leader for Darfur, Protect) told DepPolCouns on March 28 that Ban had complained to DPKO and OLA that they had not adequately teed up the Karake case for his decision in the aftermath of a Spanish indictment and arrest warrant against him for alleged war crimes in Rwanda and instructed them to perform further due diligence. Gaouette said A/SYG for Peacekeeping Edmond Mulet, accordingly, would be reaching out to the Spanish Mission to the UN to gauge the seriousness with which the Spanish intend to prosecute the case against Karake. Gaouette added his personal view that the Spanish Mission's failure to pro-actively press the case at the UN was an indication that the Government of Spain was distancing itself from the judge involved. Gaouette also complained that OLA's advice to Ban was less legal opinion on the reach of the Spanish indictment and warrant than it was an invitation to political expediency. Gaouette closed by appealing for USG assistance in breaking any bad UN news about Karake to the Government of Rwanda ("We'd like Luca Brasi to show up a half hour before us.")

¶3. (C) Gaouette reported to DepPolCouns on March 31 that the Spanish Deputy PermRep had indicated to DPKO that the judge who had issued the indictments was personally motivated by the unsolved killings of Spanish NGO workers in the 1990's. Gaouette said the Spanish DPR had made a point of saying that the Spanish Government is a separate entity from the Spanish court. Finally, Gaouette said DPKO's preliminary analysis of the indictment was that it contained no allegations that had

not been fully vetted when Karake was made UNAMID deputy force commander several months ago. Having consulted with the Department, DepPolCouns informed Gaouette that the USG was not volunteering to carry bad UN news on Karake to Kigali, that the UN should not assume USG willingness to do so as it decided what to do, and that the UN should carefully consider how to soften the blow in Kigali (by masking Karake's exit as a normal rotation, for example) should Ban's decision go against Karake.

¶4. (C) Nevertheless, A/SYG Mulet told Ambassador Wolff on April 2 that Spain was obliged to respect the indictment and arrest warrant but would not take a position on the matter with respect to the UN. U/SYG for Legal Affairs Nicolas Michel told Ambassador Wolff that the Spanish indictment and warrant put the UN in a very difficult position and that building pressure on Ban meant that doing nothing would not remain a viable option. A/SYG Kim Won-Soo, Ban's deputy chief of cabinet, confirmed to Ambassador Wolff on April 2 that Ban was coming under increasing pressure to act on the Karake matter. He acknowledged the need to protect UNAMID equities and to deal with Kigali with sensitivity. He did not indicate any need for the U.S. to get involved, noting that the UN would need to find a creative solution with Kigali.

¶5. (C) COMMENT. It is clear the UN believes the Karake issue has the potential to "blow up in its face" (Kim's term). We've made clear our concern is connected with UNAMID and the need to find a way to deal with this issue that avoids jeopardizing Rwanda's deployment. END COMMENT.
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